



Liz's Transformation

by her trainer, Jeff Rosenblum

As a personal trainer who went vegan in March 2012 and felt the benefits that include more energy, better sleep, and rarely if ever getting so much as a cold, I never push, but am always eager to share my experience with my clients. As a result, several of them have started following a similar path. Excited about their newfound way to optimum health, some have generously shared with me the healthy vegan treats that they have found tasty. A few even got together and invited me to a dinner party consisting of delicious vegan dishes that each of them cooked.

One of my clients, Liz McClellan, who I have been training for about one and a half years, has been a shining example of what a positive difference a vegan lifestyle can make. Liz, a 42-year old mother of two young children, always had a passion for fitness. She came to me after a shoulder injury all but eliminated her ability to exercise the way she previously had.

The first step with Liz was to create a program that could help rehab her shoulder. Combined with a core and lower-body routine, Liz rapidly improved, and after about three months, she was ready to take her upper-body workouts to the next level. A few weeks after that, we began going full-force, working together to help her accomplish a goal that Liz revealed to me when we first met – participating in a fitness competition.

Over the course of our training, Liz gradually went vegan, not just for herself, but she introduced this healthy way of eating to her family as well. She and I attributed much of the physical progress she made to her newly adopted vegan diet. Liz is also a top marketing executive for an international software company. As busy as this super mom who does-it-all is, Liz not only made her workouts a priority, but she consistently took time to prepare vegan meals for her and her family, and she was frequently gracious enough to share them with me.

On the 3rd of May this year, Liz's goal became

a reality when she entered the National Gym Association of Georgia Natural Bodybuilding Championship in the Bikini Classification. After many rigorous months of strength training and cardiovascular workouts, and with Liz scrupulously tracking her macronutrient intake in a vegan way, she placed second in her division, and fifth in her overall category that included contestants over twenty years younger!

With her family, friends, and co-workers in the audience, Liz confidently walked the stage to accept her medals. Immediately after the event, she placed them around her beaming son and daughter's necks. Nobody knew the dedication and determination that Liz put forth to reach this point better than those who were cheering for her, and no one could be more proud than her personal trainer.

Liz made such an amazing transformation, not only with her body, but also in how she ate and the way she felt, and it has been a true inspiration to those she loves most. As we all celebrated Liz's accomplishment later that night over a vegan pizza dinner that she had been planning for weeks to reward herself with, the talk centered around the goals that everyone desired to achieve, and striving for them in a healthy, vegan manner. That is the real power of veganism - the way one person's story can inspire others to, sometimes slowly, but often surely, try it themselves. That is usually all it takes because the benefits inevitably come. After hearing about Liz and seeing her results, more than a few of my other clients and friends who care about their health, the treatment of animals, as well as the planet, could not help but rethink their nutrition habits.

Like all other vegans, Liz and I constantly get asked how we get our protein and "what about calcium?" Even at the natural bodybuilding show that is supposed to be about health and fitness, the misinformation and misunderstanding that exists is truly unfortunate. On the bright side, however, are the variety of

vegan options that are now available at supermarkets and restaurants, all of the great books, films, and websites, and of course, Liz's and my new favorite magazine, *Vegan Health & Fitness*, that we subscribed to as soon as we discovered it.

Next step for Liz will likely be her second fitness competition later this year. With all that she learned about how to acquire her vegan protein, carbohydrates, and fat, while simultaneously being supplied with an abundance of micronutrients that are so plentiful in plant-based foods, she is motivated to go after first place. Liz's journey will surely continue to spark interest in others who are also ready to help change the world, one vegan at a time.

